

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USCINCEUR VAIHAIGEN GERMANY

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EXDIS

MILITARY ADDEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

THE FOLLOWING IS A REPEAT OF AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

1428 ACTION SECSTATE INFO AMMAN CAIRO JIDDA

DAMASCUS JERUSALEM KUWAIT TEL AVIV BHAGHDAD

USUN NEW YORK 30 JANUARY 1975. QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1428

EXDIS

DEPT PASS DIA WASH AND USCINCEUR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS MOPS PLO LE IS

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL FOR CONSTRUCTION OF LEBANESE SECURITY FENCE ALONG

ISRAELI BORDER

SUMMARY: WE NOTICE THAT ISRAELI DEFMIN PERES, IN HIS

JAN 23 MEETING WITH SENATOR PERCY (TEL AVIV 553),

REFERRED TO IDF'S PROPOSAL THAT GOL ERECT ITS OWN

"SECURITY FENCE" ALONG LEBANESE -ISRAELI BORDER. WE

GATHER TH

T PERES REGARDS SUCH STEP AS SOME KIND OF

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PROOF THAT LEBANESE ARMY IS REALLY INTENT ON STOPPING

FEDAYEEN CROSS-BORDER FORAYS INTO ISRAEL. IN OUR VIEW, HOWEVER, SUCH FENCE COULD OFFER SOME DETERRENCE BUT WOULD NOT RPT NOT STOP SUCH FORAYS, SINCE IT WOULD BE BEYOND LEBANESE ARMY'S ABILITY TO MAINTAIN AND PATROL AND WOULD ENCOURAGE FEDAYEEN TO DEVISE NEW (OR RESORT TO OLD) METHODS OF HARRASSING ISRAELI BORDER SETTLEMENTS. IT WOULD ALSO POSE UN-ACCEPTABLE POLITICAL RISKS FOR GOL IN ITS RELATIONS WITH FEDAYEEN AN THEIR LOCAL SYMPATHIZERS HERE. END SUMMARY.

1. AS NOTED USDAO BEIRUT 001 JAN 75, CONSTRUCTION OF LEBANESE "SECURITY FENCE" PARALLELING ISRAEL'S OWN ANTI-INFILTRATION BARRIER ALONG LEBANESE -ISRAELI BORDER WOULD BE A COSTLY AND TIME-CONSUMING UNDERTAKING. MORE-OVER, WITH LEBANESE ARMY ALREADY STRETCHED EXTREMELY THIN IN GROUND IN BORDER AREAS AND UNABLE -- FOR REASONS OUTLINED OUR 807 -- TO REINFORCE FURTHER ITS LIMITED STRENGTH IN SOUTH LEBANON TO ANY APPRECIABLE DEGREE, SUCH FENCE ONCE CONSTRUCTED WOULD REMAIN LARGELY UNGUARDED AND THUS SERVE AS GOAD FOR FEDAYEEN TO ESCALATE THEIR BORDER ACTIVITIES. WE NOTE THAT ENTIRE BORDER HAS BEEN RELATIVELY QUIET FOR PAST WEEK, FOR REASONS WHICH WE NOT YET ABLE TO DETERMINE.) AT VERY LEAST, FEDAYEEN COULD BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE CROSS-BORDER FIRING OF ROCKETS, MORTARS AND SMALL-ARMS AGAINST ISRAELI TARGETS, AND LEBANESE ARMY--THEN AS NOW--WOULD BE UNABLE TO PREVENT THIS COMPLETELY. THIS WOULD BE PARTICULARLY TRUE IN REMOTE REGIONS OF ARQOUB, WHERE LEBANESE ARMY MAINTAINS VIRTUALLY NO PRESENCE AT ALL AND IN WHICH ANY ATTEMPT TO ASSERT LEBANESE BORDER GUARD--INANIMATE OR OTHERWISE--WOULD INEVITABLY EMBROIL ARMY WITH FEDAYEEN ELEMENTS ANXIOUS TO PRESERVE THEIR "TURF" AGAINST ARMY CONTROL. IN SHORT, SURVEILLANCE--IF NOT ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION--OF "SECURITY FENCE" THE LENGTH OF LEBANON'S BORDER WITH ISRAEL WOULD BE BEYOND LEBANESE ARMY'S LENDER RESOURCES, AND WHILE PROVIDING SOME DETERRENCE IT WOULD SERVE AS A NEW AND TEMPTING CHALLENGE TO FEDAYEEN TO PENETRATE OR CIRCUMVENT AS PROOF OF THEIR DETERMINATION

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TO WAGE "ARMED STRUGGLE" AGAINST ISRAEL COME WHAT MAY.

2. AN EVEN MORE INHIBITING FACTOR, IN OUR VIEW, IS ADVERSE IMPACT WHICH CONSTRUCTION OF SUCH FENCE WOULD HAVE ON LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS AND ON DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE. REAL POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT FEDAYEEN OF ALL STRIPES WOULD REGARD IT AS HOSTILE ACT ON PART OF GOL AND REACT IN SUCH WAY AS TO PROVOKE ALL-OUT CONFRONTA-

TION WITH LEBNAESE ARMY THAT BOTH PLO LEADERSHIP AND GOL
HAVE LONG SOUGHT TO AVOID (SEE PARA 3 BEIRUT 644 AND OUR
7698 OF JULY 4, 1974). EVEN IF THIS DID NOT OCCUR, GOL
WOULD HAVE PLACED ITSELF IN UNTENABLE (BY ARAB POLITICAL
STANDARDS) POSITION OF OPENLY ACTING AS ISRAEL'S "PRO-
TECTOR" IN EYES OF WIDE SEGMENT OF DOMESTIC OPINION
(E.G., LEFTISTS, PRO-FEDAYEEN AND ARAB NATIONALIST FORCES,
ETC.) WHICH ADVOCATES--EVEN IF ONLY IN THEORY-FEDAYEEN
RIGHT TO PURSUE "AMRMED STRUGGLE" AGAINST ISRAELI "ENEMY".
(SAME CONSIDERATIONS, IT SOULD BE NOTED, HAVE LONG
BLOCKED PROPOSALS--MADE PRIMARILY BY CERTAIN LEBANESE
CHRISTINA POLITICIANS--THAT GOL SEEK TO HAVE UNEF-
TYPE FORCES INSTALLED ON ITS DIE OF BORDER WITH ISRAEL.)
WE BELIEVE NO RPT NO LEBANESE GOVT COULD SURVIVE DOMESTIC
AGITATION AND TURMOIL THAT WOULD INEVITABLY UNSUE FROM
TAKING SUCH STEP AS PRES SUGGESTS, AND THAT IT WOULD
SERVE ONLY TO INCREASE LEBANON'S DIFFICULTIES IN CONTEND-
ING WITH FORCES WHICH ALREADY ARE WORKING TO DRAG IT
DEEPER INTO CONFLICT WITH ISRAEL.
GODLEY

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